

March 16, 2006

Issue Alert

Support CRESA

What you can do

S. 2110 may not be the only bill in the Senate on ESA. The Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee may come up with a bill lead by Senators Chafee and Inhofe. The Crapo bill is not a competitor. There may be companion measures and some very different measures at that.

S. 2110 could move through the Finance Committee, since there are tax credits in the bill. If you want to do something, speaking to and writing Senator Grassley and members on the Finance Committee will help immensely. Further, all Westerners should contact their own Senators about CRESA and the need for ESA reform this Congress.

While ESA reform is a huge uphill battle, this is the farthest Congress has ever gotten since authorization has run out. Nevertheless, opponents are louder than proponents and we need everyone to reassure Senators that this is a good thing to do and now (this Congress) is the time!

We really need numbers of people to step up and be heard – all letters and visits will help.

Thanks!

Senator Crapo's ESA Bill Focuses on Incentives

The Family Farm Alliance Board of Directors on March 1st agreed to endorse legislation introduced by Senator Mike Crapo (IDAHO) and Senator Blanche Lincoln (ARKANSAS) that would provide incentives to private landowners to make the 30-year old Endangered Species Act (ESA) work better.

S. 2110, the Collaboration for the Recovery of the Endangered Species Act (CRESA), focuses on additional participation by landowners and states to recover species. It also introduces incentives such as tax breaks and conservation banking provisions. Conservation banking is a concept that encourages voluntary conservation efforts and partnerships and has been used successfully in several states. The bill allows the federal government to prioritize its resources to get funding to the species most in need, while incorporating local input on recovery plans and species recovery teams.

"It is clear that implementation of the ESA is laden with conflict," said Wyoming rancher Pat O'Toole, president of the Alliance. "Incentives and collaboration – not litigation -are critical ingredients to recovery of species."

Crapo and Lincoln say CRESA has groundbreaking incentive provisions. The proposed tax incentives will reward landowners who help recover species. The conservation banking provision is an innovative market program that allows landowners to profit from conservation efforts through use of conservation credits. Additionally, there are regulatory incentives for landowners who

voluntarily contribute to recovery with simpler procedures and through Farm Bill programs. For example, farmers can use Farm Bill programs to obtain liability assurances for the ESA. This bill makes it easier for landowners to do recovery work for species.

The Family Farm Alliance, an organization of Western water users, urges all agricultural water users and managers to support CRESA (S. 2110).